

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC AND FOREIGN RELATIONS
of the
SYNOD OF BISHOPS
OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH ABROAD

NEWSLETTER #21

January-February, 1979

ON THE PATH TOWARDS A NEW UNION

In the January 12, 1979 issue of Episcepsis, the official bulletin of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Geneva, an article by Metropolitan Damaskinos of Transjordan was reprinted which had appeared originally in the theological journal Consilium, concerning the question of the drafting of a confession of faith which would be acceptable to all churches and Christian confessions. This article, by the bishop who represents Constantinople in the World Council of Churches, proposes a program, and for this reason merits particular attention. It is in keeping with those ecumenical statements of Eastern bishops which we have reported in past issues of our bulletin.

Metropolitan Damaskinos begins with the statement that the future confession of faith should make sense, if it is to express unity in the faith and, consequently, the unity of the Church, which is the goal of ecumenism. It should be "a living expression of the common faith." Past definitions, according to Metropolitan Damaskinos, were determined by the necessities of the history and culture of various ages; but the Church can compose new definitions of faith when there is need. At the present time, the Metropolitan does not see the necessity of credal formulations that are binding upon all in general. He acknowledges that it is desirable to keep in mind the ancient credal statements and to determine what place belongs to them in the life and thought of the contemporary Church. At the present time, he maintains, one should remember that the full context of the faith bears man in mind, and that Christology gives rise essentially to Soteriology (the doctrine of salvation), for its validity rests upon the investigation of the pressing questions of anthropology (the doctrine of man).

Confession of faith, as the metropolitan views it, is now bound up with the position of theology, and the latter "in a certain sense should be faithful to man and the world. This is a theology which should not separate life from doxology (the doctrine of prayer). This is a theology which in its full content should acknowledge its responsibility in regard to human reason, finding harmony in its own effect on modern life." Thus, Metropolitan Damaskinos begins his theology with that which forces him down from Heaven to earth, from God to man in this world!

He states further that if we think of theology more profoundly, in the sense whereby service to man should not be separated from service to God, then our love for him leads us to love for God, and we reach an equilibrium between the transcendent and the immanent. Only by such means will separated Christians gain access to one confession of faith in Jesus Christ. "In reality," he writes, "despite the multitude of beliefs in Jesus Christ which are determined by locality, epoch and culture, there cannot fail to be one common confession of faith in Jesus Christ, just as there cannot fail to be one undivided love for Jesus Christ." It has now been revealed, in the metropolitan's opinion, that there can be a confession of faith produced which overcomes all divisions. In spite of all the different beliefs concerning Jesus Christ, it could enrich each of the churches!

If one could open a parenthesis, as it were, in the metropolitan's thoughts as outlined above, one could add that the Catholic, Arian and Monophysite heresies, all together, would not defile, but enrich the dogmas of Orthodoxy concerning Christ!

Metropolitan Damaskinos further acknowledges as vague whether different doctrines of faith are the cause of our division. He deploras the fact that the Orthodox, unlike the other confessions, have not determined whether there exists an "ecclesia extra ecclesiam" (a Church outside the Church) "which would be recognized as existing wherever there exists unity in the fundamentals of the faith (i.e., in regard to the credal statements of the great councils) and wherever the fundamentals of the Church have remained intact (i.e., in regard to the apostolic succession)."

Here we have arrived at a very insidious formulation of the question. Metropolitan Damaskinos, proceeding from this premise, arrives at the conclusion that one must "examine whether the division between the East and the West really justifies the severing of mutual relations, and to what degree. We should ask ourselves to clarify whether our divisions should not be understood as different internal traditions of faith." On this basis he already proposes to replace the question "Should we reestablish intercommunion?" with the question "Can we refrain from intercommunion any longer?"! Putting it simply, the ecumenical representative of Constantinople openly proposes to enter into communion with non-Orthodox religious bodies, not even waiting for a full and in-depth discussion of our difference of belief as regards fundamental doctrines. Thus the perverse minds of ecumenistic "theologians" seem to have no trouble finding sufficient sophistries upon which to base their betrayal of Orthodoxy.

ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE NEW UNIA

If Metropolitan Damaskinos has indicated the principle of the immanent false unification of the Orthodox Church with Roman Catholicism, the repudiation of whose false doctrines has been a prerequisite for entry into Orthodoxy, Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Demetrios of Constantinople are already assuring us of the speedy approach of the union. This has been plainly stated in Constantinople, notably on the feast of the holy Apostle Andrew the First-called.

As the December, 1978 issue of the bulletin Episcepsis reports, the Pope sent to Constantiople a delegation and a significant letter, in which he stated that he wished to continue the efforts of his predecessors for the unification of the two religions. "The service of unity is an important aspect of my new duties. It is precisely that service which responds to the will of Christ as regards His Church."

The reply of Patriarch Demetrios is also very significant, as it contains tremendous concessions. He says of the labor of unification that "no one can and no one wishes to hinder these bonds or to halt the movement." The patriarch further stated: "At this solemn moment, brethren, we declare that our common task, which has been undertaken with confidence, shall continue and reach its conclusion through the grace of the Comforter..." The patriarch solemnly declared: "We desire dialogue and unity." Recalling the joint commissions for the initiation of dialogue, the patriarch said: "This is really a great moment! The great events for which we have waited! We know that the sense of responsibility is very deep, on either side. We think that the period of preparation, full of acts of love, grace and shared Christian experience, is ended."

If Patriarch Demetrius speaks of the great significance of the coming events and of the conclusion of the preparatory period, we can conclude that his sell-out of Orthodoxy has already taken place. It remains to be seen which Churches and which of the faithful will remain loyal to Ortho-

doxy and which will betray it. Doubtless, tremendous temptations and trials await the Church.

A NEW BETRAYAL OF ORTHODOXY

In its February 28 issue, the Orthodox Observer, official mouthpiece of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in America, reports that in the ecumenical center at Chambesy, Switzerland, "the Inter-Orthodox Commission for Dialogue with the Ancient Oriental Churches decided that it was time to request that the 'official dialogue' begin, so that the re-unification of the two families of Churches might be realized in the near future." In these negotiations the Ecumenical Patriarchate was represented by Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Myron.

In the communique released by the Commission at the Orthodox Center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, it is stated that as a result of sessions conducted between February 7th and 11th, "it was noted that efforts in behalf of this desired unity were initiated in 1971," when a special theological commission was set up to initiate a dialogue to define the doctrine of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The newspaper article diplomatically notes that "the Orthodox and Oriental Churches have been separated since 451 A.D., when differences arose concerning the terminology used to describe Christ's perfect humanity and perfect divinity."

The secretary of this Commission is Metropolitan Methodios, the representative of the Patriarch of Alexandria; and Metropolitan Damaskinos of Tranoupolis, who organized the meetings, is the representative of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Representatives of the Patriarchates of Antioch, Moscow, Romania, Bulgaria, and the Churches of Greece, Cyprus and others also took part.

The participants in this task are not, however, admitting that the question is far from a mere "difference of opinion," but is an attempt to reach an agreement with heretics who were long ago anathematized by the Ecumenical Councils: Monothelites, Monophysites, Nestorians, and others like them who have hitherto not agreed to accept the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils, beginning with Chalcedon (or, in some cases, Ephesus), and who consider those whom the Orthodox Church has condemned as heretics (e.g., Euthycius) to be saints.

A SESSION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Myron, a member of the Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, who arrived in the United States for a brief visit following a session of the Central Committee of the W.C.C., gave an interview in late February to a correspondent of the official mouthpiece of the Greek Archdiocese in America on the topic of the progress of the ecumenical movement and the results of the session of the Central Committee.

Questioned by the representative of the newspaper Orthodox Observer as to what was the central question at the discussions, Metropolitan Chrysostomos stressed that "the human being, everywhere in the world, was at the heart of the thinking of all the speakers...the theological justification for this preoccupation with humanity is based on the fact that such ecumenical agencies, as well as the Church itself, exist 'for us and for our salvation,' as our creed expresses it." It is quite strange that a bishop placed an ecumenical agency on a par with the Church and applies to it words from the Symbol of Faith which refer to the Savior of the world! However, the "Orthodox" representative of a church newspaper did not himself notice anything odd in such an interpretation of the Symbol of Faith.

Metropolitan Chrysostomos also emphasized that next year is dedicated by the W.C.C. to "Good News for the Poor." "I think," said the metropolitan, "this will make a significant contribution to the ecumenical movement, not only from a social, economical or moral point of view, but also spiritually and theologically."

The last session of the Central Commission of the W.C.C. benefitted the communist bloc, which was represented by its own clerics in that organization. As a result of new election, the Catholicos of Georgia was chosen (to replace the late Metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad) as a president of the W.C.C., and Professor Theodore Sabev, representative of the Church of Bulgaria, was chosen as Deputy General Secretary.

UNITY AMID DIVERSITY?

In its February 8th issue, Christian World, a newspaper printed in England, reports that a synod of Anglican bishops will long be occupied with discussion of the reform of their liturgical texts. As is well known, five years ago the Anglicans experimentally introduced changes into their prayerbooks under the title "Series III," and this immediately provoked much turmoil and controversy in their midst. The new liturgical version, now submitted to the Anglican synod for review by a Revision Committee, represents a wide selection of options for various texts. Thus, for example, one may now choose one's favorite variant from among four existing in the texts of the eucharistic canon; two optional forms of greeting before the eucharistic canon can be selected from; there are also two forms of "Lord, have mercy", a number of new formulae for blessing the faithful, and even a new variant of the Lord's Prayer!

The editorial of the newspaper expresses the typically Anglican point of view, stating that "This richness of material may well bewilder the average churchgoer and runs the risk of splitting the Church of England in its worship even more than it is now. Yet the Committee obviously hope that greater variety will help unite the church rather than divide it. They are at great pains to insist that all forms should be acceptable to every tradition within the church."

The Anglican Synod, after a day and a half discussing hundreds of amendments to the text of the new liturgy submitted by the Revision Committee, was impelled to defer the final decision on the matter to its next session which will take place in June. At the same time, Bishop Leonard Graham of Truro informed the Revision Committee that the Archbishop of Canterbury had asked him to raise the question of the clause, accepted by the Anglicans in the Symbol of Faith, regarding the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son as well as the Father, the insertion of which into the Creed still upsets "Orthodox" ecumenists. Bishop Graham, who had presented this message from his primate, nonetheless argued that, in his opinion this question, in view of its importance, was too important to be decided by the Liturgical Commission, and should be left to all the bishops.

DIALOGUE ON THE QUESTION OF PRIESTHOOD FOR WOMEN

In its March 1st issue, the British newspaper Christian World reports that debates regarding the possibility of women becoming "priests" in England have been far from fruitless. At a session of the synod of the Anglican Church, Archbishop Coggan of Canterbury informed his colleagues that he had had a conversation with the Catholic Cardinal Hume, reviewing the question of priesthood for women, and asked "his guidance as to how the dialogue (with the Roman Catholic Church) should continue." The cardinal promised to bring to the attention of the Pope of Rome the de-

tails of the discussions taking place on that topic. As is well known, the introduction by the Anglicans of priesthood for women has had a detrimental effect on their dialogues with the Catholics.

As the synod was in session, a group of people, headed by Bishop Ronald Bowlby of Newcastle, held an organizational assembly to review the question of how to influence public opinion in favor of priesthood for women, which has already been accepted in America, but is still encountering some opposition in England.

A NEW PROPOSAL ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

In its February 1st issue, the National Catholic Reporter reports that the newspaper Catholic Voice printed an article by a Catholic priest which called upon Pope John Paul II to begin accepting women into the College of Cardinals, and which suggested that the famous Mother Theresa of Calcutta, a missionary nun in India, be the first such woman cardinal.

Voicing this suggestion in a Catholic diocesan newspaper in Oakland, California, Fr. Larry Lorenzoni stated that "I am not being facetious when I suggest that, before discussing the possibility of women priests, one ought to discuss the possibility of women cardinals."

Maintaining that historically a cardinal did not have to be in priestly orders, Lorenzoni asks: "Why can't we have some good women, representing half of humanity, among the pope's official counsellors?"

REFORMS OF THE MASS SEEN AS DISRUPTIVE

In its February 25th issue, the newspaper National Catholic Register reports that the Homiletic & Pastoral Review, one of the most widely distributed magazines for the Catholic clergy in America, made an appeal in its editorial, calling upon the bishops to disband their liturgical commission in the United States. The editor, a Jesuit, noted that the bishops' committee on the liturgy had proposed three further changes in the mass, and stated: "Not one of these is really needed...We should be given time to digest and absorb them. We now need a sense of stability and permanence in the liturgy. So, I plead with our bishops: no more liturgical changes. Give us a break. We need at least one generation to become familiar with the new liturgy and to learn to love it."

Fr. Kenneth Baker asks that the Commission be disbanded, if only for twenty years, during which Catholics could grow accustomed to the new liturgy.

AN APPEAL BY THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIANS & JEWS

Founded in 1928, the National Conference of Christians & Jews, an organization which conducts nation-wide programs for the instruction of various groups whose purpose is to destroy prejudice and discrimination, has distributed a pamphlet entitled A Holocaust Memorial Service for Christians--Yom HaShoah.

This carefully printed booklet explains in detail why the publishers think Christians should repent for the crimes committed during World War II by members of the National Socialist Party in Germany, and how they can show their sympathy and trust for the relatives of those who suffered. Eight or nine pages are dedicated entirely to a well-thought-out program intended for the clergy and laity, some of the suggestions contained therein we outline below.

The 22nd of April should be established as a day for the observation in Christian churches of Yom HaShoah, the Jewish memorial day. The pamphlet offers a selection of various texts of prayers, litanies, antiphons and hymns, as well as literary excerpts suitable for the occasion.

In a note appended to the first suggestion, we read: "Since this suggested date coincides with the Eastern Orthodox celebration of Easter in 1979, those congregations may choose to hold the Holocaust Commemoration one week later." Further on it is suggested: to deliver a sermon on the commemoration of the holocaust victims; to invite a rabbi or a Jewish leader to speak; to take part in local gatherings arranged by Jewish leaders (at which one may participate in demonstrations, wear the Jewish "Star of David" or a black mourning band on one's sleeve, and arrange a dinner with the local synagogue); to organize an open-house in a church or a synagogue; to listen to a lecture on Jewish culture and religion, and even to initiate a Jewish-Christian dialogue. The pamphlet further notes; "Many Christians have wished to have a Christian symbol attached to the yellow star of David when they wear it. They feel that their witness of solidarity with their Jewish brothers and sisters is strengthened if they are clearly identified as Christians who are voluntarily taking this badge as their own. If you do choose to use the yellow star as a symbol, and wish to have some Christian identification on it, it is recommended that you use the Sign of the Fish, the oldest Christian symbol. This is preferable to using the Cross...While precious and meaningful to Christians, the sign of the Cross may evoke memories and images which would negate that which you wish to convey. This is a time for special sensitivity to the feelings of others" (p.11).

The pamphlet calls upon all that are interested to demonstrate creative initiative in this area, and the National Conference of Christians & Jews is even prepared to come to an encounter and help in arranging a nice program of this nature.

METROPOLITAN THEODOSIUS GREETES ANOTHER FLOCK

Metropolitan Theodosius, head of the "Orthodox Church in America", published a Christmas appeal in the February issue of its official mouth-piece, The Orthodox Church, signed by him and addressed to the clergy and faithful of the parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate's exarchate in North America.

Noting that "Ours is the awesome responsibility to make the good news of Christ credible by demonstrating, through love and the abolition of division and enmity, that we are truly disciples of the One Who came to save, heal and unite," Metropolitan Theodosius shares his feelings as regards the trip he made to the Soviet Union two months ago.

In the appeal he not only makes reference to the historical significance of the Russian Orthodox Church for America, but also states that "All of us who are the inheritors of the mission of the Church of Russia in North America are now challenged to match the Church of Russia's faith, courage and creative initiative. Metropolitan Theodosius concludes his unusual address with an appeal to the clergy and faithful of the Moscow Patriarchate and its parishes to read and study the "Patriarchal and Synodal 'Tomos of Autocephaly' of April 10, 1970, as well as the Agreement which the Tomos carried out and ratified, seeking to discern in these acts God's will for us and His plan for Holy Orthodoxy in America."

Similarly, the existence of parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate within the boundaries of the "autocephalous" Church in America is a source of considerable bewilderment for any impartial observer. Is it that Metropolitan Theodosius hopes that the parishes loyal to Moscow, having assiduously studied the Tomos received by him, will come over from Moscow to his Church in America? Apparently, Moscow hasn't hindered this.

HAS ARCHBISHOP LEFEBVRE YIELDED?

According to a report printed in the National Catholic Register (January 21st), Archbishop Lefebvre, who has not accepted the reforms of the Second Vatican Council and for this reason was forbidden by Pope Paul VI to serve, was received privately, one might even say secretly, by Pope John Paul II.

The Florentine newspaper La Nazione reported on January 9th that the meeting was arranged through Cardinal Siri of Genoa. According to that newspaper's account, Archbishop Lefebvre, as a result of his encounter with the pope, must also meet with Cardinal Seper, head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. It is rumored that Archbishop Lefebvre's meeting with the pope was to have taken place with Pope John Paul I, but the latter died before the plans could be realized. The principle prerequisites for the audience laid down by the Vatican for Archbishop Lefebvre were his recognition of papal authority and infallibility and a serious intention to conduct a constructive dialogue.

Newspapers reported almost nothing concerning the results of the meeting between the pope and the conservative archbishop. He himself, however, gave a television interview in which he stated that he hopes that all sanctions against him "will be lifted within a few months, and that the Holy Father will allow us to continue our experiment."

ANGLICAN THEOLOGIAN PROFESSES ARIANISM

The Episcopalian magazine The Living Church reports that one of the most prominent Anglican theologians, Geoffrey Lampe, a clergyman and professor of theological science at Cambridge University, is quite openly challenging the dogma of the Holy Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity, in his opinion, has "not much future." He maintains that even now many theologians are arriving at a Jewish point of view, i.e. that God is infinite and boundless, and thus an understanding of Him cannot be confined by any dogmatic definitions.

"If the model posed in a particular doctrine ceases to illustrate the insights of faith, it loses its value. The doctrine of the Trinity is one such model...No one has ever ventured to suggest what the difference is between generation and procession" (God the Son is pre-eternally generated—born—of the Father, while the Holy Spirit proceeds from God the Father). On this basis, the Episcopalian cleric and theologian Professor Lampe holds that one should no longer call Jesus Christ the Son of God, although one may with full confidence maintain that God was in Him.

An unexpected rebirth of the first large-scale heresy, which in its time shook the foundations of the Church, is becoming increasingly noticeable not only among Anglicans and various Protestant sects, but even among Catholics. However, this circumstance does not prevent "Orthodox theologians" in the least from carrying on their dialogues on the question of unity in the future ecumenical church of Antichrist!

YET ANOTHER SELF-STYLED AMERICAN ORTHODOX JURISDICTION!

We have received a clipping from the December 20, 1978 issue of the Post, a newspaper published in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, which reports that an parish of the "American Orthodox Archdiocese of Philadelphia" has been opened there, which pretends to descend from the "American Mission of the Russian Church in Exile."

If such an archdiocese does in fact exist, it in any case bears no relation to the Russian Church; furthermore, there has never been such an American Mission. The newly-opened self-styled parish is headed by the "priest" Joseph Feldhausen, who only last year was still a layman. He was made a "priest", as it were, by the Ukrainian bishop Hrihory, with whom our Russian Church has never been in communion, not recognizing his consecration as true.

We hope that the faithful of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad will not turn for spiritual sustenance to this church of Holy Wisdom which only calls itself Orthodox but is not so in fact.

A FEELING OF "DIGNITY" FOR HOMOSEXUALS

One World, the official mouthpiece of the World Council of Churches, reports in its March issue that a group of international ecumenical leaders has formed a charitable fund whose goal is "to promote the dignity of homosexual men and women as a perfectly normal minority."

This society, called the "Viva Trust", has been registered in London and is headed by a thirty-two member committee composed of prominent clergymen, among whom are five bishops! This group has as its primary purpose "to challenge irrational prejudice against natural minorities," holding that at present they are being subjected to injustices.

* + * + * + * + * + * + * - * + * + * + * + * + * + * + * + * + *

The editor of the Newsletter gratefully acknowledges the receipts of donations from: His Eminence Metropolitan Philaret, the Rev. A. Skliarov, the Rev. V. Schatiloff, Mr. D. Gorham, the Rev. A. Gavalas, W. Kelly, I. Nockman, N. Mabin, I. Brennan, Abbess Ariadna, Prof. Dorozynski, M. Nedelsky, G. Lardas, D. Rohan, the Rev. di Mauro, Presbytera Carras, the Rev. D. Serfes, J. Lalor, V. Lapin, T. Nipper, B. Brown, the Rev. Horn, J. Manley, the V. Rev. Donovan, P. Russo, the Rev. Kawana, R. Pearson, the Rev. Rasch, Dr. Hreshko, the Rev. Krosnjar, J. Johnson.

The editor and staff of the Newsletter wish to express also their profound regrets for the delay in mailing out this issue of our publication. We realize that many of our subscribers have been waiting for some weeks to receive their first issue and hope that the inconvenience of waiting has not been a temptation. Our next issue, which has already appeared in Russian, should soon be translated and mailed out, and we hope that our service will improve substantially in the future.

ACT

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, confessing itself to be the free portion of the Church of Russia which from ancient times has been glorified with a multitude of saints, acknowledging how glorious amongst them is the small choir of blessed men and women who were "fools for Christ's sake," reverently numbers amongst this choir the radiant and blessed Xenia, homeless wanderer of St. Petersburg.

Her severe way of life, her podvig of prayer, her self-denial and love for the suffering illumine us with the light of another, better life.

Various incidents of the gracious help of God through Blessed Xenia which have been stored up in the memory of the people in the course of two centuries have been supplemented now by new testimonies concerning the good deeds performed by her outside the boundaries of Russia, collected by us beginning in 1971, when the preparatory work for her glorification was initiated.

The corrupters and enslavers of the Russian people have blocked, as it were, the way to the sacred tomb of the Blessed one, but thereby our faith has only been tested. With faith and love we bless and call upon all henceforth to honor the Blessed Xenia as a saint glorified by the Church; the solemnity of the glorification shall be held in the Synodal Cathedral of the All-Holy Theotokos of the Sign in New York, on Sunday September 11th (old style).

Furthermore, to celebrate everywhere the feast of the Blessed one on January 24th (old style) and September 11 (old style—the day of her glorification), having her icons in the churches and glorifying for all this our Lord Who is wondrous in His saints. Amen.

September 9, 1978 (o.s.)

Feast of the Nativity of the All-Holy Theotokos;
Commemoration of the holy and righteous Joachim and Anna,
the parents of the All-Holy Theotokos, and the Day of the
glorification of St. Theodosius, Archbishop of Chernigov.

Signatures:

Metropolitan Philaret, presiding bishop of the Council
Archbishop Seraphim of Chicago and Detroit
Archbishop Athanasy of Buenos Aires and Argentina-Paraguay
Archbishop Philothei of Berlin and Germany
Archbishop Vitaly of Montreal and Canada
Archbishop Antony of Los Angeles and Southern California
Archbishop Antony of Geneva and Western Europe
Archbishop Antony of San Francisco and Western America
Archbishop Seraphim of Caracas and Venezuela
Archbishop Theodosy of Sydney and Australia-New Zealand
Bishop Nathanail of Vienna and Austria
Bishop Lavr of Syracuse and Holy Trinity
Bishop Nikandr of Sao Paolo and Brazil
Bishop Nektary of Seattle
Bishop Pavel of Stuttgart and Southern Germany
Bishop Alypy of Cleveland
Bishop Konstantin of Boston

RESOLUTIONS

of the

COUNCIL OF BISHOPS OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH ABROAD

1978

+ * + * + * + * + * + * + * + * + * + * + * + * + * + * + * +

DECISION OF 31 AUGUST/13 SEPTEMBER, CONCERNING THE BROTHERHOOD OF ALL SAINTS OF RUSSIA IN BURLINGAME, CALIFORNIA

RESOLVED: The Russian Orthodox Educational Brotherhood of All Saints of Russia is henceforth considered as under the immediate spiritual and administrative care of the ruling bishop of the Diocese of Western America. All the affairs of the Brotherhood, which have hitherto been submitted to the primate of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad and to the Synod of Bishops for review, are now entrusted to the diocesan bishop of the Diocese of Western America who, as a general rule, is to be considered the pastor of the Church of All Saints of Russia in Burlingame, California. Corresponding changes must be introduced into the by-laws of the Brotherhood.

DECISION OF 1/14 SEPTEMBER, CONCERNING THE LEGAL REGISTRATION OF PARISHES

From the reports of the diocesan bishops, it is apparent that in a whole series of cases in past years, there have arisen complications in independent parishes coupled with the threat of the possibility of the defection of such parishes under the influence of certain elements. Primarily, this has figured in those cases when, in a given parish, by-laws are in effect other than the Normal Parish By-Laws, and in which the jurisdiction of the local bishop and the Synod of Bishops over the parish is not expressed with sufficient clarity. To eliminate such manifestations in the future, the Council of Bishops recognizes that it is essential that the diocesan authorities review the by-laws and acts of incorporation or civil registration of all parishes and, in those cases where it might appear that legal vagueness as regards ecclesiastical jurisdiction is present, the by-laws should be rectified by amendment or alteration to bring them into accord with articles 1-10 and 28 of the Normal Parish By-Laws.

DECISION OF THE SAME DATE, CONCERNING THE ORDINATION OF CELIBATES

The following decision was handed down on the question of the ordination of celibates: Celibates are not to be ordained before the age of forty-five and without a thorough investigation of their lives by the diocesan bishop who, in each individual case, if the candidate has not reached that age, must request the approval of the Synod of Bishops.

DECISION OF 2/15 SEPTEMBER, ON THE PREPARATION OF CANDIDATES FOR THE PRIESTHOOD

Archbishop Vitaly delivered an oral report on the question of the shortage of clergy. When we hear in reports that some parish is being serviced by a circuit priest, we know already that he does not have a real pastorate. All bishops should suggest to the pastors of parishes that they make a survey of their parishioners, singling out those who, as regards their family (marital) status may canonically be considered candidates for the priesthood. These lists should be forwarded to the diocesan bishop. They should then be reviewed by him and, perhaps, someone might be found who could be taught. Not many people will be found, of course, but perhaps someone could be gleaned therefrom. One should prepare them with a course of reading, and later,

at the Diocesan Headquarters, where they should live and learn at the daily services, read books in the episcopal library, and receive an education for the priestly service. The parishes should assist them materially during the period of their preparation. More experienced priests of the diocese, as well as the bishops, could be their instructors. Even men of advanced age could be considered as candidates. They would still be able to serve the Church, if only for a few years, and even this would be a help. The bishops should be obliged to report to the Synod, after a period of time has elapsed, that they have put this measure into effect. If any of the bishops find it difficult to organize a course of study, Archbishop Vitaly is prepared to put their candidates up himself, after which they would return to their own dioceses. Archbishop Vitaly is prepared, in any event, to help with travelling expenses, even if from Europe.

RESOLVED: To put into effect the plan proposed by Archbishop Vitaly for preparing priests, as an additional option to Holy Trinity Seminary.

DECISION OF 5/18 SEPTEMBER, CONCERNING CORRESPONDENCE COURSES IN THEOLOGY AND RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CULTURE

The Council approves the general principles of correspondence courses in theology and Russian Orthodox culture as a legitimate ecclesiastical foundation for such an undertaking. Keeping in mind the extremely severe shortage of clergy, it is deemed essential to introduce an accelerated course, parallel to a full course of study, which would be able to fulfil our urgent need for clergy. It is resolved to request the Synod of Bishops to appoint an appropriate commission which would commence work no later than January of 1979, and to allocate the necessary funds for the payment of a secretary and other expenses of the commission.

DECISION OF THE SAME DATE, ON THE REPORT OF ARCHPRIEST A. KISELEV ON THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE MILLENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE BAPTISM OF RUSSIA.

The council resolves:

- 1.) to express its gratitude to the Commission for the Preparation of a Committee for the celebration of the millennial anniversary of the Baptism of the Russian People for its initiative and for the organization of conferences of the Russian Orthodox community.
- 2.) to propose to the diocesan bishops, in collaboration with the Commission, that similar conferences be organized in all places where Russian Orthodox people live in the diaspora.
- 3.) to approve the printing of the magazine Russian Renaissance as a singularly important and highly commendable task, and to express its gratitude to Prince S.S. Obolensky, the magazine's editor-in-chief.
- 4.) that in addition to the amount of money allotted by the Synod of Bishops for the publication of the journal, all dioceses should be obligated to support the publication as much as possible, both with special donation and by the promotion of subscriptions.
- 5.) that in view of the fact that the millennial anniversary celebration will exceed the limits of the parishes and dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad and will be a social event of secular significance, the hierarchy be asked to acquaint themselves carefully with Fr. Kiselev's report (especially with the questions raised therein on pages 6-8) and submit their ideas concerning it to the Synod of Bishops before January 1, 1979.

DECISION OF THE SAME DATE, CONCERNING THE MEMORIAL CHURCH IN BRUSSELS

On a supplementary report delivered by Archbishop Antony of Geneva on church life in the stavropigial Memorial Church in Brussels, Belgium, the Council of Bishops adopted the following resolution: The Council of Bishops, having listened to the reports of Archbishop Antony on life in the Western European Diocese, expressed the desire to acquaint itself in particular with ecclesiastical life in the stavropigial Church of the Holy and Righteous Job the Longsuffering. On learning from Archbishop Antony, as rector of the church, of the difficulties that have ensued in connection with the desire to paint the walls of the church with frescoes, the Council of Bishops:

- 1.) expressed a unanimous desire to cover with frescoes the walls of the Memorial Church of Tsar-Martyr Nicholas II and all slain in the Revolution.
- 2.) In view of the fact that the means have as yet not been collected for the full frescoing of the church, a partial frescoing should be initiated and the collection of the means should continue with the help of God and of good people.
- 3.) resolved to express its gratitude to Archimandrite Kiprian for his readiness to fresco the church free of charge and to ask him to submit a plan for the frescoing to the Synod of Bishops and the church's building committee.
- 4.) resolved to ask the members of the building committee to prepare all that is necessary by the spring of the coming year (scaffolding in the church, room and board for Archimandrite Kiprian and materials for his frescoing) for the beginning of the labor, and to invoke God's help upon the committee.

DECISION OF THE SAME DATE, ON THE QUESTION OF THE ADMISSIBILITY OF THE ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION OF WOMEN

RESOLVED: Firstly, a refusal to be reconciled to the fact that the Lord has not bestowed children is apparent in artificial insemination. Thus, people have not restricted themselves to the usual means for the facilitation of conception. Non-believers rejoice in the success of conception outside the mother's body, seeing in it the progress of human science against nature and the will of God. The child conceived in such a manner is conceived without an act of love that unites a man and a woman for the bearing of children. Hence, one may expect the most far-reaching consequences from this action against the law of nature established by God, even to the point where a family can be formed without a husband. This process opens the path to further abuses of morality beyond the substitution of the semen of unknown men during the artificial insemination of women. Thus, they strive to wrest the birth of children from the hands of God and to turn it over to men.

DECISION OF THE SAME DATE, ON THE QUESTION OF THE ADMISSIBILITY OF HEART TRANSPLANTS

The Council of Bishops acknowledges that the heart is such an important organ, embodying many traits of the human character and bound up with man's mental and spiritual life, that its transplant cannot take place without effecting the character and, in general, the psychophysical nature of man. Consequently, as is well known, the transplantation of a heart usually shakes then entire nature of that man who has received a new heart; so much so that in many cases he can in no way feel at ease with it. Medical authorities are now already speaking much less about the use of this operation, and its frequent

implementation, as awaited after the first reports of its success, has not come to pass. Orthodox Christians must refuse such an operation and must refrain from willing their hearts for transplantation to other people.

DECISION OF THE SAME DATE, CONCERNING THE SO-CALLED WESTERN RITE

RESOLVED: The Western Rite in its present form was introduced after the apostasy of the West from the Orthodox Church and is not in accord with the liturgical life of the Orthodox Church with which it had been united for the course of many centuries. It does not reflect the Orthodox Church's liturgical tradition. Thus, it does not satisfy converts to Orthodoxy when they familiarize themselves with it to a greater degree, and has nowhere enjoyed success. In consequence of the above, the Council of Bishops does not recognize it as possible to permit the Western Rite in the Russian Church.

DECISION OF 6/19 SEPTEMBER, CONCERNING THE FORM OF COMMEMORATING THE HIERARCHY AND THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES

On 6/19 September, after deliberation on the question of insufficient uniformity in the form of the commemoration of the hierarchy and the civil authorities, the Synod of Bishops was commissioned to issue and encyclical reminder concerning past decisions on this same subject.

DECISION OF THE SAME DATE, ON THE REPORT OF PROTOPRESBYTER GEORGE GRABBE CONCERNING CASES IN CONTEMPORARY ECCLESIASTICAL PRACTICE

RESOLVED: To thank Protopresbyter George Grabbe for a beautiful report; and to submit the questions raised by him for the review and decision of the Synod of Bishops.

DECISION OF 7/20 SEPTEMBER, ON THE GLORIFICATION OF THE NEW-MARTYRS OF RUSSIA

Having heard the report of Archbishop Antony of Los Angeles on the glorification of the new-martyrs and the resolution of the committee for the glorification, the Council of Bishops expresses its gratitude to His Grace Archbishop Antony for a full and detailed report and un-animously adopts the following resolution:

- 1.) To glorify the Russian new-martyrs and departed confessors as being in the assembly of the saints at the next Council of Bishops, or, if possible, at a Pan-Diaspora Council. For the remaining period of time to carry out the necessary, intensified preparation of the flock for the glorification by the printing of and wide distribution of the available material on the glorification on martyrs and on the martyrs themselves, compiling lists of known martyrs and confessors.
- 2.) To entrust all the indicated preparatory labor to the Synod of Bishops.
- 3.) To remind the bishops of the necessity of fulfilling the decree of the Council of Moscow in 1918 concerning the annual serving of panikhidas for the newmartyrs on the Sunday closest to 25 January/ 7 February.

DECISION OF THE SAME DATE, ON THE VENERATION OF MARTYRS AND ASCETICS NOT YET GLORIFIED AND ON DEPICTIONS THEREOF

RESOLVED:

- 1.) One must not celebrate services to martyrs or ascetics before their (official) glorification. One may read akathist hymns (to them) only during one's private prayers at home, but not during public prayer in church.

2.) It is not permitted, either in church or in the home, to possess icons of even the most honored persons until they have been glorified by resolution of the Higher Ecclesiastical Authority.

After the report of the Head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem and his financial account, several decisions were passed. of which the following are of note:

- 1.) To thank Archimandrite Anthony for his report and to invoke the blessing of God upon those who labor in the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem and upon the Palestine Orthodox Society.
- 2.) To bless the dispatching of nuns for the collection of donations in Australia, and for the conducting of separate collections in the United States, Europe, Australia and other countries.
- 3.) To express gratitude in the name of the Council to E.S.Fisher for her generous donation for the needs of the Mission.
- 4.) To further promote the organization of pilgrimages, making attempts to arrange the organization of such with a travel agent, renting a separate airplane for pilgrims from the United States and Canada.

DECISION OF THE SAME DATE, CONCERNING THE REPORT OF ARCHBISHOP VITALY ON THE REVISION OF THE SYNODAL FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

RESOLVED: After several questions, to confirm the explanations of the accounts.

- 2.) Directing attention to the fact that no dues at all are received from the diocese of Western Europe, the Council requires Archbishop Antony at the next diocesan assembly to explain the best method of the participation of his diocese in the maintenance of the Higher Ecclesiastical Authority.
- 3.) To raise the tax on gravesites in Holy Trinity Monastery and Novo-Diveyevo Convent from ten to twenty dollars.
- 4.) To establish that fees for the awarding of gramotas for the laity be paid not be the recipients themselves, but by the parishes which recommend that they be granted awards. At the same time, to review the fees for awards.

DECISION OF THE SAME DATE, CONCERNING THE BESTOWAL OF A BLESSING UPON V.K.HOEKE

RESOLVED: To bestow a blessing upon Valeria Konstantinovna Hoeke for her labor in the composition of the service to St. Xenia the Blessed of Petersburg.

DECISION OF THE SAME DATE, CONCERNING AN EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE TO G.V.LUKIANOV

On the same date, after hearing the report of G.V.Lukianov, the director of the Educational Administration, it was decided to thank him for his work and report.

DECISION OF THE SAME DATE, CONCERNING THE SELECTION OF A SECRETARY FOR THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS

- 1.) It is resolved to alter the position of secretary of the Synod.
- 2.) The position of secretary may be occupied by a person of priestly rank.
- 3.) Protopresbyter George Grabbe was unanimously elected to this position.

DECISION OF THE SAME DATE, CONCERNING THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS

RESOLVED: To reappoint all the previous members of the Synod:

- 1.) Honorary Member of the Synod, Deputy to the Presiding Bishop—
Archbishop Seraphim of Chicago and Detroit;
- 2.) Vice Deputy to the Presiding Bishop—Archbishop Vitaly of Montreal;
- 3.) Archbishop Antony of San Francisco and Western America;
- 4.) Bishop Laurus of Syracuse and Holy Trinity.

If, due to reasons of health, it is difficult for Archbishop Seraphim to travel to a session of the Synod, he may send Bishop Alypy of Cleveland as his deputy.

DECISION OF THE SAME DATE, CONCERNING THE PARTICIPATION OF BISHOPS IN SESSIONS OF THE SYNOD

By a decision of the same date, it was decided to invite to sessions of the Synod bishops in order of their seniority; the Synod of Bishops will pay one half of their fare.

DECISION OF THE SAME DATE, CONCERNING AN EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE TO V.K.GOLITSYN

On the same date it was decided to express gratitude to Prince V.K. Golitsyn, starosta of the Synodal Cathedral of Our Lady of the Sign, for his labors in the organization and preparations for the celebration of the glorification of St. Xenia the Blessed of Petersburg.

DECISION OF THE SAME DATE, CONCERNING THE CONVOCAATION OF THE NEXT COUNCIL

On the same date it was decided: to convoke a Council of Bishops, or a Council with representatives from the clergy and the laity, if the latter proves possible, in 1981, hopefully in Jordanville, and, in that event, during the first half of the month of August.
